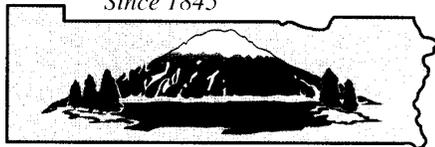


LEWIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Since 1845



Lewis County, Washington

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Sheila Unger
Board Administrator

January 1, 2009

2009 Budget Message

To the Citizens of Lewis County:

It is a pleasure to present the 2009 Budget. This budget represents many months of work on the part of staff and your elected officials. Revenue is decreasing in many County funds that receive pass through and/or restricted funding due to the downturn in the economy. General Fund revenue, which is the primary operating fund and holds the discretionary funding for the County, remains flat with little or no growth. Difficult decisions were made in this years' budget in an effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of your County government.

Budget Process

Early in 2008 the County sent a Citizen Survey to a random sampling of citizens (20% of each District) in an effort to gather input on your priorities. Out of 2,733 surveys the County received 490 responses. This information was reviewed by your elected officials as decisions concerning programs were being analyzed. Mandated programs were identified and reductions in services were considered.

The 2008 Budget for the General Fund was budgeted with a \$5.75 million deficit (2008 expenditures more than 2008 revenue). In an effort to more closely balance the General Fund some difficult decisions needed to be made. The 2009 General Fund budget deficit is \$2.47 million and uses reserves from previous years to balance the budgeted costs to anticipated revenue.

Flood Response

The County continues restoration work due to the 2007 flood. Much of the road work was completed during 2008 but many repairs are continuing into 2009. The County will continue working with Federal, State and Local agencies to find short and long term solutions to our flooding issues.

Economic Development

In an effort to improve economic development the County, working with consultants, has completed mandated reviews of the Critical Areas Ordinance and statutory review of all of the Comprehensive Plan, making recommendations to the Planning Commission and taking the proposed changes through the public participation process, culminating in adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

County Revenue

Total County budgeted revenue is \$108,975,010 for 2009 which is an increase over 2008 of 8.6%. Over \$5 million of this increase is for road projects related to the 2007 flood. The increased funding is anticipated from FEMA and grants for completion of repair work.

General Fund revenue is budgeted at \$33,990,837 which is -0.96% less than estimated actual revenue for 2008. This projection is based on a 1% growth in property tax (the statutory limitation), with most other revenue holding steady. Sales tax for 2008 was higher than anticipated due to sales taxes received from construction for flood repair. Intergovernmental revenue increased by \$166,573 and comes from rates charged between departments and does not reflect a true revenue increase. If revenue received does not meet expectations the County may need to reduce the 2009 budget mid-year.

County Expenditures

Total County budgeted expenditures for 2009 are \$114,716,518 compared to the 2008 budget at \$113,247,180. The Roads Fund increased expenditures by almost \$6 million for flood repair and construction projects. The Community Development Department and Health Department programs were reduced due the economic slowdown.

General Fund expenditures are budgeted to decrease by \$1,660,970 (4.4%) from the 2008 original budget. Estimated 2008 actual expenditures are \$302,939 less than the 2009 budget. In an effort to balance the General Fund major budget cuts were adopted for 2009. During the 2009 budget process many programs were reduced, vacant positions were frozen and some positions eliminated. As salary and benefit costs increase at a rate higher than revenue growth more staffing and services will need to be reduced.

Capital Improvements

The 2009 Capital budget was reduced by \$2.0 million from 2008 estimated actual expenditures as many projects were completed or postponed. The projects completed in 2008 included renovation of the Motor Pool building, Facilities building improvements, design work for the Courthouse plaza, and completion of the Coroner Evidence building. The 2009 transportation portion of the budget will be primarily focused on reconstruction of roads and bridges that were damaged or destroyed in the flood. The Roads Fund has budgeted \$14,161,000 for 2009 projects.

To our County Employees

We encourage our county employees to excel in service to our citizens. It is absolutely imperative that each of us remembers our responsibilities as public servants. We have worked to ensure this budget provides appropriate compensation and benefits to our staff. We respect and value Lewis County employees and remind them of the awesome responsibility they possess in delivering public services. It is our responsibility to gain and maintain our citizens' trust in their government. Thank you for your service. It is an honor to serve with you.

To our Citizens

Finally, we thank our citizens for the opportunity to serve as your County Commissioners. We value your input into County operations and services and want you to know that we intend to continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your County Government. We believe this budget provides our citizens with value and will provide the resources necessary to help make Lewis County a great place to visit, do business, raise a family and retire.

Commissioners:


F. Lee Grose


Ron Averill


P.W. Schulte

Accomplishments in 2008:

Community Development

A departmental reorganization took place to more efficiently manage the needs of the department in consideration of current development, long-range planning needs, and a dynamic economy. Some jobs were eliminated or consolidated. In addition, the Department provided critical staff support to the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority which is working to find appropriate mitigation measures to address flooding issues within the Chehalis River Basin, and support to the Lewis County Transportation Coalition, planning for transportation infrastructure within the region.

Permit Center:

Implemented an updated process for permit review, including installation of a new permitting system with expanded tracking abilities

Building Division:

This division continued to provide inspection services with a renewed emphasis on the customer. Responded to local needs and assisted in documentation of damages during disasters. The Board of County Commissioners reduced fees for flood damage repairs, helping citizens get back on their feet.

Planning Division:

Major updates to the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan were adopted. Planning staff, working with consultants, completed mandated reviews of the Critical Areas Ordinance and statutory review of all of the Comprehensive Plan, making recommendations to the Planning Commission and taking the proposed changes through the public participation process, culminating in adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. In addition to mandated reviews, staff reviewed and processed yearly applications for amendments to development regulations, including rezones and changes to several cities' urban growth areas. Significant progress was made working toward a South County Sub-area Plan that will be used as a guide for land use and economic development opportunities along the I-5 corridor.

Health Department

Personal and Community Health Division:

This division provided 556 individuals with health counseling and testing for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Taught 72 classes throughout the County at various sites to individuals at risk for exposure to HIV and STD's

Provided oversight of state-purchased vaccine distribution and management by 23 health care providers in Lewis County; trained office staff in proper management of vaccine and provided ongoing consultation to provider staff in giving immunizations to children.

Offered immunizations to children without regular health care providers on a walk-in basis, as well as providing extra clinic time for children needing immunizations to return to school.

Provided preventive teaching and supportive services to more than 70 low-income pregnant women to assure they have a safe and healthy pregnancy and deliver healthy newborns.

The Woman Infants and Children (WIC) program is funded to serve 2,610 clients but they actually serve greater than 4,000 individuals

Inspected 447 licensed food service establishments and 240 food vendors at special events to assure that food is safe for public consumption

Vital Records Division:

Issued 2,136 copies of birth and death certificates requested by the public

Assessment Division:

Communicable disease investigation staff is required by law to accept reports on 26 specific communicable diseases from health care providers and medical laboratories. There were 265 cases investigated and confirmed positive by lab reports.

Responded to 38 data requests from the community; some of the information was used to apply for grants for other community agencies totaling \$800,000.

Part of the 2007 flood response team was responsible for disposal and removal of over 1,000 head of livestock.

Environmental Health Division:**Water Lab**

This division tested 8,561 water samples including 1,301 samples related to the December 2007 flood. The majority of the water samples were for bacterial tests to ensure that people are drinking water free from bacteria that could cause illness.

The water staff provided services including technical assistance, design and development reviews, water connection reviews, inspections and other activities to 707 individual wells and public water systems.

Solid and Hazardous Waste

During 2008 this division coordinated with the State Department of Ecology to remove tons of hazardous waste due to the December 2007 flood. They also removed 5,865 tons of waste tires from seven tire piles in Lewis County; the \$920,076 cost was paid by the State.

Code Enforcement Division:

Accepted and investigated 383 complaints vs. 354 in 2007.

Inspected 1,504 vehicles to determine if they met the legal requirements to be classified as "hulk" vehicles by issuing an affidavit for removal and disposal

Accepted and investigated complaints about animals to determine if they meet county and state law requirements to be classified as a dangerous or potentially dangerous animal. Either designation requires the owner to take specific actions to protect the public.

Animal Shelter Division:

Received: 2,371 stray, unwanted, injured and diseased animals

Adopted and transferred to other shelters for adoption: 1,245

Returned to owner: 130 animals

Euthanized (mostly cats) 995 animals

Senior Services Division:**Nutrition Programs**

In 2008, 1,338 individuals received 35,062 meals at one of five senior centers.

The "meals on wheels" program served 36,154 meals to 300 homebound individuals throughout the County.

Senior Services developed a meal planning collaborative of seniors who work with the dietician in planning their monthly menus for each site.

Transportation Program

People using this service must be 60 years of age or older. The funding paid for 6,025 trips that totaled 14,449 miles serving 401 unduplicated riders

Medicaid funding provides trips to people of any age on the Medicaid program to get them to health care appointments. This funding provided 4,833 trips, totaling 78,643 miles serving 507 individuals.

Social Services Division:

A Mental Health Liaison position is working to bring community entities and individuals together to provide direction and planning for community mental health services.

The housing program has begun to address homeless prevention and housing services outlined in the counties 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. This funding supported employment services to those who are in a shelter and seek to improve their situation.

Attended the Supported Housing Institute, a new housing development was planned and awarded a Housing Trust Fund Grant in the amount of \$3.5 million dollars.

Veterans Relief Program:

In 2008, 447 individuals applied for assistance and 337 veterans were approved and received help

Central Services

E911 Communications:

The County Radio Services Administrator was selected State Technician of the year.

This division completed a NOAA Weather All Hazards Radio System for East Lewis County and completed a countywide public safety software upgrade.

Southwest Washington Fair:

Over 100,000 visitors were attracted to the 2008 Southwest Washington Fair

Several buildings were upgraded on Fairgrounds for year round use by the community

Had over 1,500 exhibitors and 10,461 exhibits at the 2008 Southwest Washington Fair

Information Technology:

This team was successful in migrating from Novell to a Microsoft platform which provides a basis for more up-to-date software.

Cellular charges were reduced by \$25,000 by changing to a new vendor contract.

A tracking database was created to more closely monitor County assets.

Facilities:

Restoration of the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds and Twin Cities Senior Center was completed after the damage from the 2007 flood.

A new facilities office was remodeled with a surplus storage facility.

An exterior restoration of the Historic Courthouse was completed which included lighting and sidewalk replacement.

The renovation of the Lewis County Motorpool facility was completed.

Sheriff's Office

Operations Bureau:

A total of 15,499 calls for service were addressed

Detectives investigated 373 cases

The Lewis Regional Crime Task Force continued to vigorously pursue and arrest drug dealers, and locate the sources of illegal drug production, distribution, and trafficking.

Volunteers devoted 4,652 hours in support of LCSO programs

Participated in 11 search and rescue missions

Services Bureau:

101 Writs of Restitution were processed and served

2,564 civil papers were processed

5,144 civil process attempts were made by deputies

16,007 permits, licenses, and validations were completed

All 431 registered sex offenders were accounted for
11,098 items were received into evidence
Drug destruction totaled \$2,672,450 in street value

Corrections Bureau:

Meals Served: 240,146
Bookings: 5,307
Releases: 5,317

Division of Emergency Management:

The Bennett Road repeater site was completed and is operational. This system provides a warning system that covers the Randle and Packwood areas.

An interdisciplinary Incident Management Team was formed to be utilized in emergency situations

A weather spotter training was conducted by the National Weather Service for 33 local citizens.

A river watchers program was initiated which registered 200 local citizens to complete a training course conducted by the National Weather Service.

Partnered with National Weather Service in a rain gauge improvement project which added new Wildwood and Nehalem gauges to enhance reporting abilities in the West County

Human Resources

Developed, implemented, and conducted a County Leadership training program for supervisory employees.

Weed Control

The Weed Department provides information and assistance for control and eradication of noxious weeds in Lewis County. The program has oversight by the Lewis County Noxious Weed Control Board, made up of members representing the five Weed Districts in the County.

This division secured funding and implemented noxious weed control with the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District. They received funding from the Washington State Department of Agriculture to implement management of invasive knotweed with private landowners in the Cowlitz & Chehalis River Watersheds.

In cooperation with community partners & local agencies, the program carried out volunteer weed pulls and delivered awareness programs about invasive plants.

County Clerk

One of the duties of the Lewis County Clerk is to ensure that all documents filed in the Clerk's Office are archived as they are considered permanent records. Historically, the records have been microfilmed and with newer technology, we are now able to image documents for easier accessibility.

In 2007, the Lewis County Clerk's Office was awarded a grant from the Washington Secretary of State's Office in the amount of \$19,266. In addition to that grant, we were granted \$61,710 from the Lewis County Auditor's O & M account. With these two financial resources we were able to image the back-log of most documents on file in the Lewis County Clerk's office that had not been either microfilmed or imaged. A total of over 800,000 images were processed to achieve this goal. In addition, a part-time employee has imaged an additional 92,500 images and is in the process of finishing the remaining three years of data that still need to be completed.

The entire project is expected to be completed by May 2009 at which time over 1 million images or pages will have been added to the archives at the Lewis County Clerk's Office.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department implemented a reorganization plan to create more effective and efficient workgroups. Through a department wide, collaborative effort the Public Works team is on track to effectively deliver mandated programs and services.

Maintenance & Operations:

This division continues to keep roads and bridges safe for the traveling public. This division re-opened the road maintenance shop located on Spooner Road and created a special operations program based at Brim Road which consists of a crew that will be specialized in vegetation, bridge repair and guardrail.

Engineering Services:

This group provides an efficient delivery of the County Six Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Traffic Engineering & Operations:

Traffic Control crew completed re-stripping of 2,021 line miles on county roads and conducted traffic investigations to assess speed limits and safety.

Real Estate Services: Newly formed division by consolidating Property Management, Geographic Information Services and Land Surveying which become more streamlined and efficient with common goals and plans.

Waste Management Services:

In 2008 Solid Waste launched the commingled curbside recycling program for residents West of Hwy 7 to the county line. This division held numerous recycling events which helped reduce waste and improved the environment. Statistics include: 11,000 tires, 800 appliances, 2,900 free disposal vouchers issued, 1,900 redeemed and 1,336 tons of refuse and accepted almost 14,000 tons of Flood debris from the December 2007 disaster.